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BEFORE THE  
FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

2005 NOV -3 A 9:56

In the Matter of:

Sean Combs a/k/a "P. Diddy" or "Puff Daddy"

Citizen Change

MUR 5684

2005 NOV -3 P 12:27

RECEIVED  
FEDERAL ELECTION  
COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF GENERAL  
COUNSEL

Complaint

NATIONAL LEGAL AND POLICY CENTER, a corporation organized and existing under the District of Columbia Non-profit Corporation Act and having its offices and principal place of business at 107 Park Washington Court, Falls Church, VA 22046, files this complaint with the Federal Election Commission pursuant to 2 USC § 437g.

The primary purpose of the National Legal and Policy Center, a charitable and educational organization described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, is to foster and promote ethics in government and public life.

Respondents are individuals and corporations who have apparently knowingly and willfully violated federal law, specifically the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971, as amended, ("the Act" and "FECA") and/or the Internal Revenue Code of the United States, and/or have apparently made illegal corporate contributions to influence a federal election.

Respondents

SEAN COMBS a/k/a known as "P. Diddy," or "Puff Daddy," 888 Seventh Avenue, New York, NY 10106, (hereinafter "Combs") is the founder and CEO of Bad Boy Worldwide Entertainment Group (hereinafter BBWEG) who undertook an illegal campaign during 2004 aimed at defeating President Bush in the presidential election of 2004.

CITIZEN CHANGE, 1440 Broadway, 16<sup>TH</sup> Floor, New York, NY 10018 is an entity that purports to be a "nonpartisan" organization, but whose exact legal status is not known. The group sponsored the "Vote or Die" campaign during the 2004 election.

2604414594

### **Facts**

The facts supporting this complaint are amply documented from the public record. They fully support the allegation that Respondents Combs and Citizen Change undertook a campaign to defeat President Bush and elect Senator Kerry that was conducted in violation of the Federal Election Campaign Act (FECA).

Citizen Change appears to be either a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization, an organization that has applied to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) for such a designation, or a part of a for-profit corporation. Because the FECA strictly prohibits electioneering activity by both nonprofit and for-profit corporations, Combs and Citizen Change engaged in prohibited activities.

Moreover, Respondents failed to disclose or report to the Federal Election Commission (FEC) any of their receipts or expenditures, which must have totaled millions of dollars.

On its website (Exhibit A), Citizen Change described itself as "a non-partisan, non-profit organization with a mission to educate, motivate, and empower millions of young Americans to access their power on November 2<sup>nd</sup>." (The website URL is [www.citizenchange.com](http://www.citizenchange.com). On the date of filing of this Complaint, visiting this site provides only the message: "This site is temporarily unavailable. We apologize for any inconvenience.")

When the website was active, it also stated, "Together with the support of such media powerhouses as MTV, BET and Clear Channel, we will unite under the banner of Citizen Change to form a cultural tour de force...attacking programming, airwaves and college campuses to spread our message: Vote or Die! While the Vote or Die! Message is an alarming one, so too are the conditions affecting our communities. It has become a matter of life and death." See Exhibit B.

### **Impermissible Electioneering**

Respondent Combs made known his preference in the presidential election early in 2004 in a very public fashion. According to a February 9, 2004 *Rolling Stone* article (Exhibit C) about the eleventh annual Rock the Vote Awards ceremony at the Hollywood Palladium:

"P. Diddy was honored for his participation in various voter outreach programs, including Rock the Vote public service announcements and phone campaigns. Although event organizers were careful to emphasize the value of getting young people involved in politics regardless of party affiliation, P. Diddy's acceptance speech made clear what side he's on."

"We're going to get Bush's ass out of that office," he said.

Citizen Change sponsored six "Vote or Die!" rallies in three swing states just before election day. A rally at Wayne State University in Detroit featured Respondent Combs, actor Leonardo DiCaprio and rapper Mary J. Blige.

According to a report on ClickOnDetroit.com (Exhibit D), the website of WDIV-TV in Detroit,

"The organization (Citizen Change) is non-partisan, but all three celebrities made it clear they were supporting Democratic candidate Sen. John Kerry, Local 4 reported."

The October 27, 2004 *Detroit Free Press* (Exhibit E) reported,

"Officially, the rally was nonpartisan, but most of the crowd and stars favored U.S. Senator John Kerry over President George W. Bush.

'We are in a swing state and believe me you are the swing vote', Combs said.

'We are at a turning point,' DiCaprio said... When he told the crowd he supports John Kerry, many began chanting 'Kerry, Kerry.'"

According to the October 27, 2004 edition of *The South End*, the Wayne State student newspaper (Exhibit F), other speakers called for the election of Kerry and defeat of Bush. The paper reported that Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick stated,

"I can assume 90 percent of you out here want a change in the White House. Go to the polls, and elect a new president of the United States— John Kerry!

Violations of FECA by participants in the Citizen Change rally appear to be willful. The *South End* also reported,

"Kilpatrick admitted that the event was supposed to be non-partisan, but he voiced his opinion saying, 'It's my mic and it's my town. I'm going to say what I want.'"

Another Vote or Die! Rally took place at Temple University in Philadelphia on October 27, 2004. See Exhibit G. According to the October 29, 2004 *Temple News*,

"Although the event was billed as non-partisan, many of the performers acted contrary to its purpose, which is to encourage young people to vote, but not for any particular candidate.

Several of the events' opening acts express anti-Bush sentiments. One local performer specifically implored those in the audience to vote for John Kerry.

Rapper Mary J. Blige voiced her concerns with the current administration, highlighting disapproval with President Bush's international and domestic policies."

The obviously partisan nature of the Vote or Die! rallies became an issue at Temple. The same *Temple News* article even quoted the disapproval of the University president,

"...the policy of the university is that we don't sponsor partisan events,' university President David Adamany said. 'This apparently was approved by various groups for funding based on the assertion that this was non-partisan.'"

Likewise, the student government president Naeem Thompson was quoted,

"It's been the policy of the Temple Student Government not to campaign for anyone."

An Associated Press article (Exhibit H) published on October 29, 2005 provides some clues as to the amounts of money spent by Citizen Change during the 2004 campaign, particularly related to the rallies.

The article detailed the tour of swing states just before election day. Tour transportation included a rented 52-seat 757 jet, described as having "one big first class section," and a motorcade of five SUVs and a "party bus." Among the travelers was "a petite Maltese named Sophie" that "resides in its own Louis Vuitton bag."

### **The Legal Status of Citizen Change**

Citizen Change purports to have conducted voter mobilization on a "nonpartisan" basis. Such activities would be consistent with the activities of a 501(c)(3) organization, but a review of the IRS database of 501(c)(3) organizations reveals no 501(c)(3) organization by that name. Nor does a review of the Guidestar website ([www.guidestar.org](http://www.guidestar.org)), which contains a comprehensive listing of 501(c)(3) organizations, list the organization.

It is possible that Citizen Change has applied for such status and it has not been granted, or has recently been granted.

The Citizen Change address in New York City is the same as that of BBWEG. One of BBWEG's publicly listed phone numbers is 212-381-1590. Citizen Change listed on its website its phone number as 212-381-1589, one digit removed. See Exhibit I. Does Citizen Change share office space, telephones, office equipment and staff with BBWEG, a for-profit corporation? Were the activities of Citizen Change underwritten by BBWEG? Were BBWEG assets illegally used to promote the candidacy of John Kerry? The Commission has an obligation to find out.

The possibility of prohibited corporate involvement with Citizen Change is also suggested in an August 3, 2004, Fox News Channel report (Exhibit J) that stated:

"In the late spring, Combs was asked to be part of various concerts taking place to raise money for John Kerry...Not long after that Combs and his manger Phil Robinson made a visit to Donald P. Cogsville, an investment banker who is one of the four managing partners in RCM Saratoga, a boutique firm specializing in minority businesses. (Citizen Change's website, citizenchange.com, is registered to RCM Saratoga.)"

See also Exhibit K for evidence of Citizen Change's website registration.

### **Was the Purpose of Citizen Change to Promote a Commercial Activity?**

According to a Citizen Change press release dated July 20, 2004 (Exhibit A), Citizen Change sought "to create a sexy, fashionable t-shirt line with the VOTE OR DIE! slogan. Head designers at the Sean John clothing label will join with those at Ecko, Phat Farm, and Rocawear to create a line featuring distinct, hip interpretations of the campaign's message."

The website would later list 59 clothing and department stores in 21 states and the District of Columbia where "Vote or Die!" t-shirts could be purchased (Exhibit L). The t-shirts were modeled by celebrities including Mary J. Blige and model Tyson Beckford.

According to the August 3, 2004, Fox News Channel report:

"But what and who is behind Citizen Change anyway? I'm told that grocery billionaire, Democratic donor and Clinton enthusiast Ron Burkle is the guru guiding Sean "Puffy" Combs' recent recent conversion to political activism."

"...a chance meeting in Miami last year put Burkle in the fashion business when he crossed paths with Combs, aka P.Diddy."

"The pair hit it off, and Burkle wound up heavily investing in Combs' Sean John clothing line."

"...it's no coincidence that Combs abruptly started his Citizen Change charity last month..."

According to The Wire/Daily Hip-Hop News on September 17, 2004 (Exhibit M),

"...Diddy has struck gold with a \$100 million deal with Ron Burkle of the Los Angeles based Yucaipa Cos. Burkle's involvement is quite possibly the fuel to give Sean John the spurt to grow the line to the next level. According to the *New York Post*, Diddy's successful clothing line reached a plateau and then stagnated as a small wholesale business with apparel manufacturer, Ashok Sani."

An article in an October 13, 2004 issue of *Business Week* (Exhibit N) sheds further light on the Combs/Burkle relationship:

“What do rap music impresario Sean "Puff Daddy" Combs and former Vice-President Al Gore have in common? Los Angeles money manager Ronald W. Burkle backed each of them with cash from the California Public Employees' Retirement System.”

“In the past three years, CalPERS has committed up to \$760 million to Burkle for investments that aim to help underserved segments of society while, of course, still making money for the retirement fund. He has been putting the money to work in a string of deals that he says will benefit minorities, women, and blue-collar workers. Last year, Burkle invested an undisclosed amount in Sean John, the urban-sportswear company founded by Combs.”

T-shirts have long been a feature of political campaigns, but seldom have t-shirts been the centerpiece of a campaign. According to several media reports, Combs did not vote in any election until or since 2000.

With its emphasis on fashion, style, celebrity, media coverage and conspicuous consumption, was the real purpose of the Vote or Die! campaign an effort to generate interest in a line of clothing and/or a particular “stagnant” clothing company? Was Citizen Change’s pro-Kerry campaign conducted by a for-profit corporation, or for the direct or indirect benefit of a for-profit corporation? The Commission has an obligation to find out.

#### **Possible Coordination With Kerry Campaign**

A July 20, 2004 *Village Voice* article (Exhibit O) states,

“Indeed, Combs’s effort reached beyond celebrity media whoredom into political media whoredome. ‘Who would pass this up? It’s a blast,’ said political strategist, pundit and serial pitchman James Carville when asked why he was lending his name to Citizen Change. Combs explained he’d be deferring to the Ragin’ Cajun for political advice.”

See Exhibit P for a United Press International report of July 23, 2004 that stated,

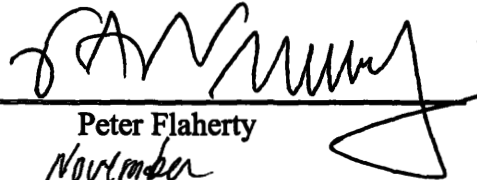
“Combs said Citizen Change was nonpartisan. However, James Carville— who once served as a close advisor to former President Bill Clinton— is also advising Combs project.”

During the same time period Leonardo DiCaprio was taking part in Citizen Change rallies, he was also taking part in official Kerry campaign events (see Exhibit Q) and apparently was featured on a phone message urging the recipient to “vote

Democratic." See Exhibit R. Were DiCaprio's travel and other arrangements coordinated between Citizen Change, the Kerry campaign, and/or DiCaprio's management in order to maximize the actor's effect on the 2004 election? The Commission has an obligation to find out.

Complainant, upon information and belief and relying on personal knowledge and the exhibits attached hereto as evidence of the possible violations of law set forth above, hereby swears under penalty of perjury that the statements and facts of the Complaint are true to the best of his knowledge and belief.

*Commonwealth of Virginia*  
*County of Loudoun*

  
Peter Flaherty

Subscribed and sworn to before me on this 3<sup>rd</sup> of ~~October~~ *November*, 2005.

  
Notary Public

SEAL

My Commission Expires:

*3/31/2007*

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Citizen Change is a non-partisan, non-profit organization with a mission to educate, motivate and empower millions of young Americans to access their power and vote November 2nd.



> VERIFY YOUR REGISTRATION  
& POLLING PLACE

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

★ &gt; VOTE!

GET INVOLVED

&gt; VOLUNTEER

RETAIL  
LOCATIONS >GET IT  
NOW! >MARY J  
SPORTS HER  
SPIRITSPREAD  
THE WORD

&gt; EMAIL SIGN UP

&gt; TELL FRIENDS

## PRESS ROOM

### VIP ACCESS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

### ★ PRESS RELEASES

#### SEAN "P. DIDDY" COMBS ANNOUNCES CITIZEN CHANGE CAMPAIGN PLANS

*Nationwide Voter Mobilization Program Directed at Community of the Forgotten Ones*

**Date: JULY 20, 2004**

For Immediate Release

New York, NY (July 20, 2004) - The man who invented the remix, Sean "P. Diddy" Combs, held a press conference today at New York University's Kimmel Auditorium to announce CITIZEN CHANGE, a national, non-partisan organization created to educate, motivate, and empower the more than 42 million Americans aged 18-30 that are eligible to vote on November 2nd.

Born of Sean Combs' frustration with the current political system, one that fails to address the needs, answer the questions, or engage the participation of the young, Citizen Change utilizes the mogul's vast resources and personal relationships with media companies and the leaders of the entertainment and fashion industry. No one but Diddy could speak directly to the political elite and the youth of America in the same breath.

Combs' stated, "From here on, I'm asking questions and I want answers. As Citizen Combs, I've got one vote and I need to know which candidate represents my concerns and me. Part of the responsibility I'm taking on is to write up a job description for the candidates and make sure they do their job."

Combs' has outlined an urgent, multi-tiered campaign that he will communicate through media that is most relevant to the target demographic. As detailed in today's speech, Citizen Change will:

- Invite other notable figures to participate in fundraising efforts and record public service announcements that will take over the airwaves with Citizen Change's urgent VOTE OR DIE! message
- Create a sexy, fashionable t-shirt line with the VOTE OR DIE! slogan. Head designers at the Sean John clothing label will join with those at Ecko, Phat Farm, and Rocawear to create a line featuring distinct, hip interpretations of the campaign's message
- Join with MTV, BET and radio partners to spread the VOTE OR DIE! message through creative programming, interviews, and guest chats
- Tour the country with carefully planned events designed to motivate and excite young voters
- Combat apathetic attitudes on a local level by working with street teams in a grassroots effort and establishing online programming that engages young voters at home and at school



*"Young voters in this country are throwing away their power to have a say about education, healthcare, and any issue that affects them." Combs explained. "These things affect your life, so - Vote or Die!"*

A consistent theme throughout Combs' speech was his desire to work to energize young, registered voters and candidates alike. His attitude of accountability comes at a time when the disparities between our country's leaders and our country's youth are glaring.

Citizen Change will empower young people to be the 'agents of change' in their own lives, and will demand accountability from the leaders they elect.



**Contact:**

Ken Sunshine Consultants  
Shawn Sachs / Tiffany Shipp  
(212) 691-2800

**Dan Klores Communications**

Lois Najarian / Karen Versoza  
(212) 685-4300



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> VERIFY YOUR REGISTRATION  
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KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

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GET INVOLVED

> VOLUNTEER

RETAIL  
LOCATIONS >

GET IT  
NOW!

SPREAD  
THE WORD

> EMAIL SIGN UP

> TELL FRIENDS

## ABOUT US CITIZEN CHANGE'S MISSION

**Citizen Change** is a national, non-partisan and non-profit organization created to educate, motivate, and empower the more than 42 million Americans aged 18 to 30 that are eligible to vote on **November 2nd** -- also known as the "forgotten ones." Founded by businessman, entertainer, actor, producer and designer **Sean "P. Diddy" Combs**, **Citizen Change** has one mission: to make voting hot, sexy and relevant to a generation that hasn't reached full participation in the political process.

Everyday young cultural leaders influence millions of young people to exercise their \$890 billion in buying power to purchase the latest fashion, music, cars and bling. The political parallel is obvious. The same way we would market a **Biggie Album**, a **Sean John** sweat suit or a Spiderman movie will be the same way we promote the urgency to vote on Election Day.

Together, with the support of such media powerhouses as **MTV**, **BET** and **Clear Channel**, we will unite under the banner of **Citizen Change** to form a cultural tour de force, relying on many of the same viral marketing initiatives so often used by P. Diddy, attacking programming, airwaves and college campuses to spread one message: **Vote or Die!**

# VOTE OR DIE!

While the *Vote Or Die!* message is an alarming one, so too are the conditions affecting our communities. It truly has become a matter of life or death. The "forgotten ones" will not be able to survive if the current issues of unemployment, failing education and denial to proper health care continue to be ignored.

However change can't happen without participation. According to the US Census, **42 million young voters** aged **18 to 30** represent **25 percent** of the voting population.

But only half of those young people were registered to vote in 2000. These statistics represent the huge disconnect between young voters and the political process. And it is cause for alarm. Citizen Change will answer that call.

In the spirit of a true P. Diddy "re-mix", **Citizen Change** has reinvented the process of mobilizing young people and minorities to the polls. Where in the past politicians have failed to appeal to the youth, **Citizen Change** has created an undeniable campaign by amassing its own "Coalition Of the Willing" which include such luminaries as **Jay-Z**, **Leonardo DiCaprio**, **Jamie Foxx**, **Ellen**

**DeGeneres, Ashton Kutcher, 50 Cent, Mary J. Blige and Drew Barrymore.** Together they will spin the infectious message of *Vote or Die!* to every corner of youth culture, resonating the importance and sexiness of being politically informed and active. If you are young you will have no choice but to join the movement.

And no movement is complete without its own fashion statement. **Citizen Change** has formed an unprecedented partnership with the top designers in the youth market place: **Tommy Hilfiger, Marc Ecko, Russell Simmons** for **Phat Farm** and of course **Sean John**, all of whom have been commissioned to design a limited edition series of T-Shirts that feature the *Vote or Die!* slogan. Proceeds from the sale of these shirts will be donated to **Citizen Change** and its voter registration efforts.

Come November the true power of youth culture will have left its mark on the political world. And at the center of the largest mobilization effort of youth voter participation in American History will be **Citizen Change**. Together alongside the cultural leaders of our day -- artists, industry moguls, athletes and community activists -- they will announce their arrival to the power of change. On **November 2nd** the community of the "forgotten ones" will be remembered forever.

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26044144604



Big mouths

## Dixies, Diddy Rock the Vote

*Artists honored for political activism*

The Dixie Chicks and P. Diddy were among those honored for their efforts in increasing voter awareness at the eleventh annual Rock the Vote Awards at the Hollywood Palladium Saturday. The gala event included appearances by California Senator Barbara Boxer and performances by Fountains of Wayne, Black Eyed Peas and N.E.R.D.

The Dixie Chicks were presented with the Patrick Lippert Award -- named for Rock the Vote's first executive director -- in part for the Texas trio's "Chicks Rock, Chicks Vote" campaign, which began with a \$100,000 donation from the band and has led to 150,000 voters registering through the program's site.

In accepting the award, banjo player Emily Robison touched on the inadvertent start to the Chicks' activism, with a crack at the expense of singer Natalie Maines. "We probably wouldn't have been here if you hadn't stuck your big ol' foot in your big ol' mouth," said Robison, referring to Maines' on-stage comment in London last year in which the singer said she was "ashamed" that President George W. Bush was a fellow Texan. The subsequent uproar led to many radio stations dropping the Chicks from their play lists, threats against the band and Dixie Chicks CD destroying parties, all of which was somewhat mitigated by the fact that the group played a long string of sold-out dates following the furor.

"The bottom line is every vote does count," added Maines. "Last year we learned the importance of not taking any of our rights for granted."

Eight-year rock veterans -- and dubious 2004 Best New Artist Grammy nominees -- Fountains of Wayne obliged the audience with their May-December romantic fantasy "Stacy's Mom" and closed with an extended version of their early alternative radio hit "Radiation Vibe," working the Cars' "Let's Go" and Steve Miller's "Swingtown" and "Jet Airliner" into the protracted jam. The Black-Eyed Peas then set the social conscience bar high with their Record of the Year-nominated "Where Is the Love," while N.E.R.D. aimed decidedly lower with "Lapdance" and other libidinous party anthems.

P. Diddy was honored for his participation in various voter outreach programs, including Rock the Vote public service announcements and phone campaigns. Although event organizers were careful to emphasize the value of getting young people involved in politics regardless of party affiliation, P. Diddy's acceptance speech made clear what side he's on.

"We're going to need to get Bush's ass out of that office," he said. "Watching CNN you don't hear a lot of talk about young people. We have to use the energy we have as young people to make them respect and recognize us. I honestly feel the president we have in office doesn't care about young people, doesn't care about minorities and I don't know if he feels the pain of the mothers and fathers of our soldiers that are dying in Iraq. We need to make a change."

**COLIN DEVENISH**  
(February 9, 2004)

# ClickOnDetroit.com

## Stars Aim To Get Out Vote In Detroit

### *P Diddy, Leonardo DiCaprio, Mary J. Blige Visit WSU*

POSTED: 9:47 AM EDT October 27, 2004

**DETROIT --** Rap star Sean "P Diddy" Combs brought star power to Detroit Tuesday night to get out the vote.



P Diddy was joined by actor Leonardo DiCaprio and singer Mary J. Blige at the campus of Wayne State University. Combs is the founder of Citizen Change -- a non-profit, non-partisan organization aimed at reaching voters -- and brought his Vote Or Die "Shock And Awe" Tour to the college campus for a 5 p.m. rally.

"Detroit, Kerry and Bush aren't here right now. They're on the campaign trail. But wherever they are, I want them to hear you. Make some noise," said Combs to the Detroit crowd.

Students -- armed with cameras and signs -- spent several hours waiting in line to see the celebrities. An unidentified student said she believed most people came to the political rally just to see the stars.

Another student told Local 4 that most young people are not informed of political issues because they believe their vote doesn't count.

The organization is non-partisan, but all three celebrities made it clear that they were supporting Democratic candidate Sen. John Kerry, Local 4 reported.

The stop at Wayne State was part of a six-city, three-day tour across America. Other stops include Milwaukee, Wis.; Cleveland, Ohio; Philadelphia, Pa.; Jacksonville, Fla.; and Miami, Fla.

**Previous Story**

- October 26, 2004: Celebrities Make Stop In Detroit For  
Vote Drive

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26044144607

## Vote or Die rally, stars come to WSU

**BY CECIL ANGEL**  
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

*October 27, 2004*

The star power of hip-hop mogul Sean (P. Diddy) Combs, actor Leonardo DiCaprio, and singer Mary J. Blige drew more than 6,000 people Tuesday to a get-out-the-vote rally on Wayne State University's campus in Detroit.

The Vote or Die rally was part of a three-day tour to seven cities in swing states key to the presidential election. Officially, the rally was nonpartisan, but most of the crowd and the stars favored U.S. Sen. John Kerry over President George W. Bush.

"This year we're not going to sit on the sidelines and complain, we're going to decide the next president of the United States," Combs told the crowd gathered on Gullen Mall.

The rally drew mostly people in their teens and 20s and many were high school students. Some arrived as early as 2 p.m., staking out places in the front row. The stars didn't appear until about 6:30 p.m. and were greeted with screams and cheers that were more concert than political rally.

"We are in a swing state and believe me you are the swing vote," Combs said.

He acted as master of ceremonies as he introduced DiCaprio, who described himself as a concerned citizen and the upcoming presidential election as "the most important election of our lifetime."

"We are at a turning point," DiCaprio said. "This is not just an election to decide a single president. ... The power of our vote will determine the direction of the most powerful court in the world."

When he told the crowd, he supports John Kerry, many began chanting "Kerry, Kerry."

Blige spoke next. She told the crowd: "They don't believe you exist. They believe you're dead."

Combs told the crowd that both candidates had not taken the votes of young people seriously. He began his movement, Citizen Change, five months ago because people were saying that young people were passive about politics and not interested in voting.

26044144503

Contact **CECIL ANGEL** at 313-223-4531 or [angel@freepress.com](mailto:angel@freepress.com).

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26044144609



42°F  
Detailed Forecast

# THE SOUTH END

THE STUDENT VOICE OF WSU | WWW.SOUTHEND.WAYNE.EDU

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**THE SOUTH END**



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## CAMPUS : P. Diddy: 'Vote or Die!'

Oct/27/2004



Jason Matthews/The South End

Sean "P. Diddy" Combs does a little dance for the crowd as Student Council member Phallon Officer (left) and Student Council Vice President Sonni Walker (right) look on during the Vote or Die rally Tuesday night at Gullen Mall

By Sharryn Harvey and Alicia Chmielewski  
Staff Writers

An enthusiastic crowd of 6,200 people greeted Sean "P. Diddy" Combs, Mary J. Blige and Leonardo DiCaprio Tuesday night in front of David Adamany Undergraduate Library

"Vote or Die!" a campaign sponsored by Citizen Change, and started by Combs, hit Wayne State University after a stop in Milwaukee. "Vote or Die!" will be making four more stops, culminating Oct. 28

Even though the event was supposed to start at 5 p.m., some students began staking out their spots as early as 2:40 p.m. Combs and his crew were late, arriving around 6:30 p.m.

"Unless his mom died, there is no reason to be late," said Serena White, 25, a senior family life education major. "We're not even important enough for him to be here on time."

"We thought it would be over by now," said Chelsea Vandenbusche, a 20-year-old junior special education major.

To try and compensate for the absence of the stars, DJ Serch from WJLB (FM 97.9) appeared on stage to get the crowd hyped. Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick and his mother, U.S. Rep. Carolyn Cheeks-Kilpatrick, D-Mich., filled the time by giving a speech about the power of young students' influence on the upcoming election.

Kilpatrick admitted that the event was supposed to be non-partisan, but he voiced his opinion, saying, "It's my mic and it's my town. I'm going to say what I want."

"I can assume 90 percent of you out here want a change in the White House," Kilpatrick said. "Go to the polls, and elect a new president of the United States — John Kerry!"

Cheeks-Kilpatrick brought up the fact that Vice President Dick Cheney voted against education, and the Head Start program, and this is why it is important for college students to vote.

"It's your town and your day," said Cheeks-Kilpatrick. "Are you ready to win?"

Combs and company arrived among screams from relieved and happy students, and went right into his speech to get young people to vote.

"They say young people are lazy, and don't care about voting," said Combs. "They will be proven wrong Nov. 2."

Leonardo DiCaprio came to the stage next to share his views about the importance of young people as responsible and concerned citizens.

"We have the opportunity to influence the policies of our country for generations to come," DiCaprio said to the assembly. "We are not going to sit aside passively and let others decide our future."

DiCaprio also spoke about the voting decline over the past 30 years and affirmed the potential impact of young voters, saying, "Forty-two million young people have the power to vote."

Mary J. Blige began her address by telling the crowd that although she knows little about politics, she understands the importance of becoming involved by expressing her voice in the upcoming election. "This is my first time voting," said Blige.

"If we don't choose our own destiny, the government will do it for us," said Blige. She commented on the candidates' lack of attempt to appeal to young audiences by saying, "They believe that you don't exist."

She also voiced her opinion that the American government does not care about

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minorities in the inner city "If we don't vote, we will die," said Blige, referring to the opinion that these groups are underrepresented and unheard by the government

"This is how they keep you in place — with fear," said Blige. "But there is nothing to fear but fear itself."

Blige used ideology and quotes from the Michael Moore film "Fahrenheit 9/11" to support her own views and to illustrate the film's importance in influencing her to take action and reach out to young people as part of the "Vote or Die!" campaign.

During the press conference Combs was asked how effective he believed the campaign would be. "Well, I think it will be very effective."

"We have taken over MTV, taken over the streets, and we are spreading the importance of the election to disenfranchised women and minorities," he said.

Shola Odumade, president of the WSU chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, said the reason why Citizen Change contacted the Detroit branch of the NAACP was because of the reputation of the NAACP in student-run civil rights and voting movements.

"Diddy wanted to focus on students, he wanted them on stage with him, he wanted them helping out with everything," Odumade, a 20-year-old senior international marketing major, said.

"It was tremendous for me representing the organization," she said. "We're about social change and social justice. It was important to be on stage to tell people to go vote."

Combs emphasized the point of getting first-time voters out to vote by instructing them to "Vote with your heart. Make it personal. Be down with yourself and your family. Vote for your future."



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## **Diddy to first-timers: 'Vote or Die'**

*By Lucas K. Murray*

**It's safe to say students who support George W. Bush wouldn't contribute to an event supporting Sen. John Kerry.**

**But that's what many of them did when anywhere from \$7,000 to \$12,000 in University funds went to the production of Citizen Change's Vote or Die rally on Wednesday.**

**Although the event was billed as non-partisan, many of the performers acted contrary to its purpose, which is to encourage young people to vote, but not for any particular candidate.**

**Several of the event's opening acts expressed anti-Bush sentiments. One local performer specifically implored those in the audience to vote for John Kerry.**

**Rapper Mary J. Blige voiced her concerns with the current administration, highlighting her disapproval with President Bush's international and domestic policies.**

**"It's a considerable amount of money and the policy of the university is that we don't sponsor partisan events," university President David Adamany said. "This apparently was approved by various groups for funding based on the assertion that this was non-partisan."**

**The Board of Trustees adopted a policy that bars the use of university money to sponsor partisan events, Adamany added.**

**Temple Student Government, Student Activities and the Main Campus Program Board, which all receive funding from the university, allocated funds for the event, according to Director of Student Activities Rita Calicat.**

**It is unclear exactly how the total cost was divided.**

**Calicat said Citizen Change billed the event as a non-partisan voting initiative.**

**"I think the real issue is the very serious breakdown by people in the university's own staff who failed to identify the nature of this event and allow the university to support it," Adamany said. "We're still looking into it."**

**TSG President Naeem Thompson said if he had known that derogatory comments about Bush were to be made at the event, TSG would not have sponsored it.**

**"It's been the policy of Temple Student Government not to campaign for anyone," Thompson said.**

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**Sean "P. Diddy" Combs, head of Citizen Change maintained a neutral stance throughout his portion of the three-hour program. In his press conference, Combs attributed the partisan outbursts to the fact that "young people have a lot of emotion."**

**"This is a non-partisan effort," he said. "I'm not campaigning for Kerry. I'm not running a campaign on the low for Kerry. I'm campaigning for the people."**

**However, Combs has been clear on his views in the past. In this month's Spin magazine Combs was quoted as saying "[We have to] get Bush's ass out of office" at this year's Rock the Vote Awards.**

**Combs founded Citizen Change earlier this year in order to mobilize thousands of young, minority and urban voters, but groundwork for the event in Philadelphia started late last week. The group contacted Temple on Oct. 21 looking for a venue to host one of six Vote or Die events in a three-day span.**

**For the event, Citizen Change booked the talent and the transportation to and from the venue. Temple provided the venue along with a stage, lighting, a sound system and security.**

**Pro-Kerry comments and comments critical of the president were not limited to Vote or Die's stop in Philadelphia.**

**At Wayne State University on Tuesday, Vote or Die tour member Leonardo DiCaprio openly supported John Kerry. Similar sentiments were echoed at a stop at Case Western Reserve University.**

**"Events have to be nonpartisan," Adamany said. "No student funds and no funds of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania should go to a partisan event. Neither the taxpayers or students should have to support political views they disagree with."**

**Lucas K. Murray can be reached at [LukeMurray33@yahoo.com](mailto:LukeMurray33@yahoo.com).**

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## All aboard P. Diddy's political party plane

### Musician seeking 'extreme political makeover'

The Associated Press  
Updated: 4:24 p.m. ET Oct. 29, 2004

**ABOARD P. DIDDY'S PLANE** - At first glance, it appears presidential: A private jet bound for swing states days before the election. A campaign staff. Hungry media. An omnipresent slogan, "Vote or Die."

But there's no candidate — just Sean "P. Diddy" Combs in all his hip-hop, hype-loving glory, putting in work for his nonpartisan organization Citizen Change.

The mastermind behind those "Vote or Die!" T-shirts is flying from New York to Milwaukee, Detroit, Cleveland, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Miami on a three-day tour to inform young people and minorities that voting is important and, well, "sexy."

The Associated Press hitched a ride on Combs' jet — nicknamed Air Force Change — for the Milwaukee and Detroit legs of the tour. Here's what went down:

8:46 a.m.: R&B star Mary J. Blige, who'll be speaking alongside Combs, arrives at the airport flashing a hip-hop meets Jackie Onassis look with big sunglasses, a black-and-white petticoat and headband pulling back her long locks. Combs is nowhere to be seen.

9:18 a.m.: Boarding begins. The 52-seat rented jet is one big first-class section, more Hugh Hefner's Big Bunny than President Bush's Air Force One. There are comfy burgundy leather seats with brass accouterments, but the personal ashtrays on each armrest have been welded shut. Red, white and blue flags (no stars, just stripes) and Citizen Change posters add a patriotic touch.

10:08 a.m.: Combs arrives with a pillow and smaller-than-expected entourage, which includes burly bodyguards and a petite Maltese named Sophie. The dog resides in its own Louis Vuitton bag.

10:18 a.m.: Combs, who started Citizen Change earlier this year, strolls through the plane and greets everyone. He's sporting a "Vote or Die!" T-shirt, of course, beneath a denim ensemble by Sean John, his personal fashion label.

Does he prefer to go by P., Puffy, Daddy or Diddy?

"Hi, I'm Sean," he tells The Associated Press.

#### **Extreme political makeover**

10:54 a.m.: Cruising altitude. The captain turns off the seat belt sign, although most of the members of the media have already begun prancing

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around the cabin. Combs is at the front of the plane, working on the speech he'll give in Milwaukee.

"We wanted to do an extreme makeover of the election process," Combs tells AP about the motivation behind the tour.

11:27 a.m. Puffy Air begins its descent into Milwaukee. "Entertainment Tonight" reporter Maria Menounos and her camera crew, who are also along for the ride, film an intro. The bubbly correspondent mentions something about Brad Pitt being at children's hospital in Los Angeles.

12 noon: Six-vehicle motorcade arrives including five SUVs ... and a party bus. Tom Gast, an admitted non-Puffy fan and the plane's pilot from New York to Milwaukee, eyes the media awaiting Combs' exit from the jet.

"Even though I'm voting for Bush, I still made the flight as smooth as possible," Gast reveals to the AP.

But sir, Combs is not endorsing either candidate. He says "Vote or Die!" isn't about the candidates, it's about the people.

"Kerry isn't smart enough," Combs later tells AP. "Instead of throwing a football around, he should take his butt into the inner-city and see how a young kid is going to school. And you don't see Bush taking the time to go to BET or MTV. Nobody was talking to this community. I deal with them every day."

12:29 p.m.: Combs and the motorcade arrive at the downtown Milwaukee Area Technical College. A group of fans have gathered outside temporary barricades, begging for Sean's John Hancock.

"I love his music," an autographless Sarah Vershowske, 18, says of Combs, who turns 35 on Nov. 4. "And he's hot."

12:55 p.m.: A mob of students is stuffed into the 1,800-seat Cooley Auditorium, many screaming and holding up "Vote or Die!" signs while perched atop the theater-style seats. Before Combs emerges on the stage, MATC President Darnell E. Cole repeatedly warns the throng: "Get off the chairs."

1:03 p.m.: The man enters to some "Vote or Die!" chants and "Puffy, I love you!" screams. Combs introduces Blige to even more screaming.

"I'm gonna get real raw," Blige warns. "I saw 'Fahrenheit 9/11' and I'm about to go there. I'm not afraid because God has taught me one man can change history."

Blige's emotional anti-war, pro-woman speech elicits a range of emotions from the crowd. Some yell "Amen!"; others cry. She says her father went to Vietnam and "came home a nut. And he abused my mother. He abused us through my mother. And she abused us because my father abused her." The "Children of the Ghetto" singer blamed the government for brainwashing her parents.

"I don't think I want to benefit from a robbery of innocent poor people's blood who did not deserve to die the same way you do not deserve to die

today," Blige says. "But that's what will happen if we do not vote. We will die."

### **'Bum rush those polls'**

1:12 p.m.: After Blige's speech, Combs addresses the crowd. He's less emotional, more focused.

"I want y'all to bum rush those polls if you're registered, and let them know we have the power," Combs says. "So that the next election that comes around, instead of them speaking to the NRA, AARP, soccer moms, NASCAR dads, they'll be speaking to you, the forgotten ones, the one they turned their backs on."

2:10 p.m.: Combs arrives back at the tarmac; Air Force Change isn't ready to depart for Detroit yet. So, followed by his 50-person entourage, he walks across the four-lane street to Amelia's, a restaurant and lounge specializing in pizza and beer.

Waitress and Combs fan Tabitha Maki's jaw practically drops when she sees the hip-hopster enter the eatery. "I have all of his CDs," Maki, 23, tells the AP.

But Diddy declined to dine. The plane was ready. "There was no fried chicken," Combs joked to the AP. The motorcade arrives to drive everyone back across the street.

2:29 p.m.: Back on Air Force Change, field director James Gee, who helps Combs write his speeches and usually works on real political campaigns, hasn't slept since yesterday.

"One of the reasons Citizen Change has been so successful is because Puffy does real talk," he tells AP before crashing for a catnap. "He doesn't have an ax to grind. He's not against nobody. He's not for nobody except the people."

4:22 p.m.: The plane lands in Detroit. Combs is still energetic. On the ride to the next rally, the man who once arrived at the MTV Video Music Awards in an 18-wheeler, beams about his latest mode of transportation.

"My plane has a lot of flavor. Later on, we're going to have mimosas," he promises.

7:12 p.m.: Combs and Blige join actor Leonardo DiCaprio on an outdoor stage at Wayne State University. The three address the behemoth crowd, more fitting for a concert than a political rally. Together, the trio looks like a sort of surreal, postmodern presidential campaign commercial — Combs as president, DiCaprio as vice president and Blige as first lady.

Although Combs says he has no political aspirations, it's the sort of image he sees on the horizon.

"There will be an opportunity to have a woman president, a black president, a Latino president, a gay president," he told AP. "Anything's possible if a community flexes its power. That won't happen overnight though. We have to stay focused. We have to grow our power within politics to be able to break down those barriers."

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## Puff Daddy: Behind the Politics

Tuesday, August 03, 2004

By Roger Friedman

**FOX NEWS**

Puff Daddy | Record Biz

Puff Daddy: The Real Story Behind 'Vote or Die'

**Sean Combs's** new "voter awareness" organization, Citizen Change, has poached its executive director from **Russell Simmons'** Hip-Hop Summit Action Network.

**Alexis McGill** recently decamped from the HSN, where she was political director, to run Citizen Change (slogan: "Vote or Die").

But what and who is behind Citizen Change anyway? I'm told that grocery billionaire, Democratic donor and Clinton enthusiast **Ron Burkle** is the guru guiding Sean "Puffy" Combs' recent conversion to political activism. And just who is Ron Burkle anyway?

You may not have noticed 50-year-old Burkle at the Democratic convention last week. He didn't speak, but his presence spoke volumes. He spent four days at the convention in a luxury suite, entertaining **Bill and Hillary Clinton, Ben Affleck, Leonardo DiCaprio, John Cusack** and Combs.

Indeed, Burkle presided over the one and only meeting between Affleck and Combs, now members of the **Jennifer Lopez Former-Fiancé-and-Husband Hall of Fame**.

(But, according to a source, many tried crashing the Burkle suite, including **Christie Hefner**, daughter of **Hugh**. "She just showed up and brought a lot of people," says my insider. None of them were bunnies.)

But Burkle, who's given hundreds of thousands of dollars to the Democrats over the last several years, seems to be, if not behind, then influential in Citizen Change.

Burkle is, famously, the largest supplier of ingredients to McDonald's through his Golden State Foods. He is also the largest grocer in the U.S., thanks to his ownership of Kroger.

He may be better known to you for his long friendship with **Michael Jackson**, whom he hosted last spring at his San Diego estate. For a couple of years, he was even in business — surely now to his regret — with Hollywood's **Michael Ovitz** in the short-lived Artists Management Group.

But a chance meeting in Miami last year put Burkle in the fashion business when he crossed paths with Combs, aka "P. Diddy."

The pair hit it off, and Burkle wound up heavily investing in Combs' Sean John clothing line. Thanks to him, we're about to have Sean John boutiques everywhere, not to mention a Sean John women's line in addition to Sean John men's clothes, casual wear, and perfume.

Last fall, Burkle's charitable foundation made a six-figure contribution to Combs' "Diddy Runs the City" marathon run, which benefited New York City schools. The foundation also makes hefty donations to a host of liberal causes and educational programs, from the Anti-Defamation League to People for the American Way, the Elton John AIDS Foundation and the Walden Woods Project.

But it's no coincidence that Combs abruptly started his Citizen Change charity last month, followed by his appearance in the Burkle box in Boston.

In the late spring, Combs was asked to be part of various concerts taking place to raise money for **John Kerry**. Let's put aside the fact that Combs doesn't actually sing or rap; he's too smart to put himself out there as a performer. The real Sean Combs is an impresario, sort of the hip-hop **David Merrick**. And of course Burkle had a \$100 million investment in him.

"We were thinking we should do something on the political side," says a Burkle insider, "with Puffy."

Not long after that, Combs and his manager **Phil Robinson** apparently made a visit to **Donald P. Cogsville**, an investment banker who is one of the four managing partners in RCM Saratoga, a boutique firm specializing in minority businesses. (Citizen Change's Web site, [citizenchange.com](http://citizenchange.com), is registered to RCM Saratoga.)

Cogsville introduced them to **Joseph Merlino**, a communications consultant who came up with the idea for Citizen Change.

Combs wouldn't have to actually register voters, as Rock the Vote does. He would just have to use his unique promotional skills to get voters to the polls. (Combs himself came up with "Vote or Die.")

"I developed the idea and the positioning," Merlino told me yesterday. "Sean and his manager approached the head of RCM Saratoga with a bunch of different concepts. The idea is not to go after registration, but to increase the turnout."

So, here's the real question then: What draws someone like Ron Burkle to Sean Combs, one-time defendant, prep-school graduate, owner of multiple monikers and dangling platinum crosses?

My Burkle insider says, "He's a quick study. He likes to play it cool, but he knows what he's doing. Ron's relatively young, and he sees Sean's ambition."

Combs, by the way, got high marks in the Burkle suite last week. When his "rented monsters"—gigantic security guards with thick necks who never spoke—were asked to leave because of overcrowding, they did so very politely.

Record Biz: Still Exist Out There?

Sometime in the post-music era (circa 1983) right after **Grandmaster Flash**, **Elvis Costello** and **Talking Heads** set up the templates for the future, there have been occasional glitches.

Every once in a while, there's been a great single, even though corporate radio has done its best to make sure we don't hear it.

Did I miss a group called **The Libertines**? Yes.

Now **Randy Poster**, the man who compiles the most interesting soundtracks for movies, ("Little Black Book" is his new one) has sent me a CD he cooked up that includes "For Lovers." This sterling three minutes comes from someone named **Wolfman** and his pal **Pete Doherty**, who were evidently part of the Libertines.

Can you get this record? Probably, but you'd have to know about it. Ditto **The Detroit**

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## **Sohh** Hip-Hop & Money: Diddy Gets \$100 Mill For Sean John Expansion

**The Wire / Daily Hip-Hop News**

written by Carl Chery (carl@sohh.com)  
Wednesday - Sep. 17, 2003



In addition to a Sean John main store set to open in Manhattan next spring, **Sean "P.Diddy" Combs** is plotting the opening at least 10 new stores next year. But the mogul's expansion feat would have been impossible without a \$100 million cash infusion the fashion label just received from an LA-based investor.

While urban designers, including **Russell Simmons** have recently been on the hunt for cash investors, **Diddy** has struck gold with a \$100 million deal with Ron Burkle of the Los Angeles based Yucaipa Cos. Burkle's involvement is quite possibly the fuel to give Sean John the spurt to grow the line to the next level. According to the *New York Post*, Diddy's successful clothing line reached a plateau and then stagnated as a small wholesale business with apparel manufacturer, Ashok Sani.

Combs will remain at the helm of Sean John, serving as chairman and chief executive of the company. The clothing line's annual report over the past years reveals sales of about \$300 million annually according to the *New York Post*.

Meanwhile, Diddy is facing another lawsuit, now from Moore & Bode Cigars who claim the rapper revealed trade secrets in his new music video. The Miami-based cigar company is asking for \$15,000 in damages from Diddy and an un-named cameraman.

In the lawsuit, the company claims that the "Shake Ya Tailfeather" video features their "unique method of rolling cigars" and their secret blend of tobacco. The footage was apparently shot in the owner's absence even after the cameraman was told to leave the premises without the company's authorization.

"We'll investigate and gather all the accurate information before we make any comment publicly," a Diddy spokesperson said in a statement.

Despite the slew of lawsuits, Diddy is keeping busy. Recently named one of **Fortune's** richest "40 Under 40", the rapper will feature material on **Britney Spears'** forthcoming album and last week wrapped a video in Jersey City, NJ

with **Lenny Kravitz** and **Pharrell Williams** for "Show Me Your Soul," *Bad Boys II* soundtrack's newest single.

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## Yahoo! India Finance

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Wednesday October 13, 12:00 AM

### Pretty Liberal With The Cash

What do rap music  
impresario Sean "Puff  
Daddy" Combs and  
former Vice-President  
Al Gore have in  
common? Los Angeles  
money manager  
Ronald W. Burkle  
backed each of them  
with cash from the  
California Public  
Employees'  
Retirement System.  
Nobody cultivates the  
rich and famous quite  
the way Burkle does.

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The 51-year-old  
billionaire frequently hosts celebrity-packed charity events at his  
Beverly Hills estate. He has given millions of dollars to political  
causes, most of them connected with the Democratic Party. Even  
former President Bill Clinton is on his team, serving as a senior adviser  
to Burkle's investment firm, Yucaipa Cos., in return for a slice of the  
profits. But can Burkle turn his A-list Rolodex into high-powered  
returns for California pensioners?

In the past three years, CalPERS has committed up to \$760 million to  
Burkle for investments that aim to help underserved segments of  
society while, of course, still making money for the retirement fund. He  
has been putting the money to work in a string of deals that he says  
will benefit minorities, women, and blue-collar workers. Last year,  
Burkle invested an undisclosed amount in Sean John, the  
urban-sportswear company founded by Combs. In May, he was one of  
the backers of Gore's planned \$75 million cable-TV station, INdTV,  
which aims to provide news and entertainment for 18-to-34-year-olds.  
And in August, he paid \$300 million -- some of it CalPERS money --  
to buy TDS Logistics Inc., a Canadian auto-parts concern that had been  
hit by a strike the month before.

Burkle argues that the Combs and Gore deals not only reflect his social  
mission but are also good commercial investments. Combs's apparel  
business, he says, is one of the nation's fastest-growing companies,  
reaching nearly half a billion in sales in just six years. With Gore,  
Burkle says he was able to invest in a cable station -- currently running  
Canadian news -- at a very low price because cable operators had yet to  
renew their subscriptions. After Gore laid out his business plan, the  
cable operators quickly re-upped. Burkle says both companies employ  
minorities and women and are creating jobs in urban areas. In the case  
of TDS, Burkle brought in a Yucaipa labor-relations specialist to help  
settle the strike, which resulted in wage increases, adjustments in  
workers' shifts, and a commitment from the management to resolve  
several workplace issues. "We've gotten great returns by treating people

well," Burkle says.

#### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The son of a grocery-store manager, Burkle made a fortune in the 1980s and '90s buying and selling supermarket chains such as Ralphs Grocery Co. and Dominick's Finer Foods Inc. He says the rewards of socially conscious investing outweigh the risks. After the 1991 riots in Los Angeles, for example, Burkle says he spent \$50 million to rebuild damaged stores and keep workers employed. Those stores were later part of a 1998 merger between Fred Meyer Inc. and Kroger Cos. (KR) that netted Burkle \$1 billion. In choosing him to manage money in May, 2001, CalPERS said Burkle had earned an average annual return of 45% over the preceding 13 years. How much CalPERS makes won't be known until the investments are sold in a few years.

The money committed to Burkle is a small part of CalPERS' portfolio. The nation's largest pension fund, with \$166 billion in assets, CalPERS provides health-care and retirement benefits to 1.4 million current and former government employees in California. Three years ago, it began a big push into socially responsible investing. Burkle was one of 11 advisers chosen from among 67 who applied to manage this money. He got \$200 million to invest in capital-starved urban and rural markets. A year later, CalPERS committed as much as \$560 million more for Burkle to invest in companies managed in ways that don't hurt labor. Burkle's deals also illustrate how the line between business, social connections, and politics can be blurred as pension funds come under increasing pressure from labor unions, politicians, and activists to pursue goals other than simply making money. Gore has said that his new network will not espouse any particular political beliefs. But the deal was brought to Burkle by San Francisco venture capitalist Richard Blum, another INdTV investor, whose wife is Democratic Senator Dianne Feinstein.

Burkle says he and Combs have been friends for about eight years -- since their meeting at a party at Burkle's house. Combs recently entered the political fray, starting a get-out-the-vote drive with the slogan, "Vote or Die!"

#### PARTY ANIMALS?

These relationships strike some observers of the pension-fund world as just a little too cozy. "We should be concerned as taxpayers," says Stephen M. Bainbridge, a professor of law at the University of California at Los Angeles. "I don't want them making investment decisions so they can get invited to Puff Daddy's next party or advance their political agendas."

CalPERS declines to comment, but Burkle says that is certainly not the case. And he says winning his contracts from CalPERS was equally above board. He says he never has used his connections to influence the awarding of state money-management contracts. Still, he told BusinessWeek, he will no longer contribute to the campaigns of the California governor, state treasurer, or controller while he pursues new business with CalPERS. Since 1999, Burkle has contributed more than \$600,000 to campaigns for state office.

His focus, he says, is entirely on making money for California's pension system and bettering life for those less fortunate than him. "If I want to live in this big house, I have to feel good about myself," he says, sitting in the living room of his 32,000-square-foot mansion while a white-coated attendant serves him cranberry juice. California taxpayers better hope so.

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## Puff Piece

**Sean Combs issues an electoral ultimatum, with a side order of ego**

by Ta-Nehisi Coates  
July 20th, 2004 4:45 PM

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For rapper-producer-fashion mogul-Restaurateur-Broadway actor-marathon runner Sean "P. Diddy" Combs, the 2004 election is simple: "Vote or die." Combs has been called a lot of things, but prosaic has never been one of them. So with typical flare, he unveiled his new voter registration organization at a press conference today, along with its morbid slogan: **Citizen Change**.



Ego is the key word here: Combs's own visage, along with his old-school black power salute, is part of the Citizen Change logo. Before he began speaking to the crowd of a few hundred reporters, camera crews, and admirers, a screen flashed photos of the luminaries who evidently helped inspire Citizen Change. Among them were Malcolm X, John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King Jr., Gandhi, and . . . Puffy. "Today is a day that will go down in history," Combs announced to the crowd.

image: Courtesy of Citizen Change

Arrogant he may be, but Combs is one hell of a showman. And like a Baptist preacher he peppered his announcement with "that's right!" 's and "ya'll hear me!" 's. During Q&A, he commented on his own responses, "That was a good answer! Good answer! We on a roll people!" When he announced the stars backing his effort, Combs couldn't help but add his own color commentary. "Oh no! Ellen DeGeneres!" he said. "We're a diversified group."

Indeed, Combs's effort reached beyond celebrity media whoredom into political media whoredom. "Who would pass this up? It's a blast," said political strategist, pundit, and serial pitchman James Carville, when asked why he was lending his name to Citizen Change. Combs explained he'd be deferring to the Ragin' Cajun for political advice. "I don't have a long history of voting," Combs said when challenged on his citizen activist merits. "But I do have long history of making things hot and relevant."

More by Ta-Nehisi Coates

**Bloc Like Me**  
Gay marriage and abortion tug African Americans toward the Republican Party

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### Analysis: Hip-hop election?

By Pat Nasso  
UPI Hollywood Reporter

Los Angeles, CA, Jul. 23 (UPI) -- When the Democratic National Convention opens Monday, one of the many related activities in Boston will be the Hip-Hop Summit Action Network drive to register more new young voters -- a campaign that organizers hope will get the attention of politicians who are accustomed to low Election Day turnouts among young voters.

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Russell Simmons, the chairman of the organization, said the group has registered nearly 1 million people at 23 Hip-Hop Summits and other events across the country.

The voter-registration drives have been promoted with appearances by such pop, rap and hip-hop stars as Beyoncé, Eminem, Will Smith, P. Diddy, Jay-Z, Alicia Keys, 50 Cent and Snoop Dogg.

Plans call for appearances in Boston by Reverend Run of Run DMC, Jadakiss, Mase and other hip-hop artists.

Simmons told United Press International that the stars have been very generous with their time on behalf of the voter-registration drive.

"The whole hip-hop community has not turned us down for any request," said Simmons. "Eminem, 50 Cent, Puffy, Jay-Z -- no one has said no. If they're available, they come."

Simmons said the drive will lead to strong turnout by young voters, who traditionally have not turned out at the polls in numbers consistent with their size relative to the overall population.

Hip-hop mogul Sean Combs -- known to music fans as P. Diddy -- has launched his own campaign to get young and minority voters involved in the Nov. 2 election. Citizen Change, as his campaign is called, will place political ads on the MTV and BET cable channels and organize a nationwide

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voter-registration drive.

In a statement, Combs said he wanted the campaign to attract people into the political process who have felt alienated from politics in the past -- and have therefore been overlooked by politicians.

"The forgotten ones will ultimately decide who the next president is," said Combs. "According to the latest polls, Bush and Kerry are neck-and-neck. We will make the difference. We will be the deciding factor."

As Combs was announcing Citizen Change in New York Tuesday, The New York Observer reported, he was at a loss for words when a reporter from the paper asked him about his own voting record. Combs -- who was wearing a T-shirt that said "Vote or Die" -- conceded he had not voted since 2000.

The Observer said Combs tried to turn the moment into an argument on behalf of his voter-registration drive.

"I was just as disenfranchised as the younger disenfranchised voters," he said. "It's just recently ... that I started to educate myself and understand the way the system works. So that's what makes this thing so much more relevant, because I'm not talking from the outside."

Combs said he understands that many young people and minorities think "the system doesn't work," but he said he can't just sit back and complain about it.

"So I don't have a long-lasting record history of voting, but I do have a long-lasting record of communicating and motivating and energizing and synergizing young people and, you know, I'm just like them," he said.

Combs said Citizen Change was non-partisan. However, James Carville -- who once served as a close adviser to former President Bill Clinton -- is also advising Combs' project.

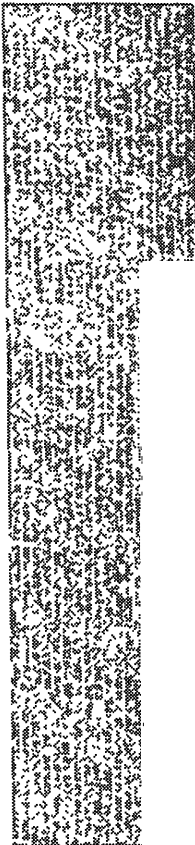
Simmons said the Hip-Hop Summit Action Network voter-registration drive will also set up shop in New York during the Republican National Convention. He said his project had received support from both Democrats and Republicans.

"We've only got some money from the Democratic National Committee," said Simmons. "Maryland (Republican) Gov. Robert Erlich and Lt. Gov. Michael Steele are ... very, very accepting."

Steele made Maryland history in January 2003 when he became the first black to sworn in to a statewide elected office in the state's more than 350-year history. He serves as vice chairman of the Maryland Bush-Cheney '04 Leadership Team and is a member of the African-Americans for Bush National Steering Committee.

Simmons said he has high expectations that the Hip-Hop Summit Action Network voter-registration drive will succeed.

"I think it's going to be so dramatic, the turnout, that people are going to be



accountable to them (young voters), both Republicans and Democrats," he said. "I believe that young people, it's in style and becoming more and more in style for them to take advantage of their responsibilities and their opportunities. It's the beginning of a major movement that will make this country more compassionate and -- the real word -- conservative, not wasteful."

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## News

## DiCaprio visits USF to campaign for Kerry

By Stefanie Green  
Associate Editor  
October 20, 2004

Joining the list of celebrities trying to get college-aged students to vote in the very tight 2004 presidential race is *Titanic* and *Catch Me If You Can* star Leonardo DiCaprio. He and former Environmental Protection Agency chairwoman Carol Browner will be in the Phyllis P. Marshall Center Ballroom at 9 a.m. today to campaign for Sen. John Kerry.

Omar Khan, former student body president, said DiCaprio's visit is part of his national college tour -- he was at the University of Central Florida on Tuesday.

Khan said he has heard some people say the reason they vote for someone is based on attractiveness, but he's not sure how many people will be persuaded by DiCaprio's looks. Khan added that he is impressed by the way public figures are getting involved in the election.

"Leonardo is an actor who you normally would not see acting in a political role, and this is a trend we have been seeing a lot this year," Khan said. "We haven't seen anything like this before to try to get the youth to vote."

Organizations such as "Declare Yourself," "Rock the Vote" and "Choose or Lose" are recruiting entertainers such as DiCaprio and P. Diddy to encourage those between the ages of 18 and 24 to vote.

"A lot of entertainment people in general have gotten involved in the election with appearing and giving their opinions," Khan said. "It really shows and says something about how important this election is."

DiCaprio's co-campaigner, Browner, has been involved in politics. She was chairwoman of the EPA for the Clinton administration. Both Browner and DiCaprio will try to encourage people to vote for the Kerry-Edwards ticket. They will also be discussing what they say is President George W. Bush's terrible environmental record.



"The event should be really cool and entertaining even though it is at a rough time, 9 a.m.," Khan said.

Students for Kerry and the Kerry-Edwards campaign are sponsoring the event. ■

## DiCaprio visits USF to campaign for Kerry

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Leonardo DiCaprio

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**Build your own custom RSS** XML**XP DNC - New Stuff - Session 17 Banners**Published in [Xpdnc.com](#) - Indexed on Nov 9, 2004 Relevance: ★★★★★

FROM NOVEMBER 2004 FORWARD: SARS AND ECONOMIC RECOVERY BANNERS The SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) impact on the economic vitality is still being felt those afflicted communities. Tourism worker employment levels have not yet returned to pre-SARS levels. Tourism agencies continue to develop campaigns to draw tourists to their centres. Banners are presented in support of these renewed tourism campaigns on several pages. FROM NOVEMBER 2004 FORWARD: GLOBAL WARNING CAMPAIGN BANNER This banner was presented to provide support for the Global Warning Campaign.

**Leo in my machine**Published in [Monkeycube.com](#) - Indexed on Nov 9, 2004 Relevance: ★★★★★

Group: Members Posts: 420 Joined: Oct. 04 2002 Posted: Oct. 21 2004, 20:05  
Leonardo DiCaprio left us a message on our answering machine today, urging us to vote for democrats. "Hi this is Leonardo DiCaprio urging you to vote democratic this year. Democrats care about making college more affordable and making us safer at home and respected in the world. So vote democratic. For more information call 800-519-3502. This is Leonardo DiCaprio urging you to vote Democratic." So I called the number and asked to speak with Leonardo. They said he wasn't available.

**Gems or coal? Hollywood's holiday lineup**Published in [CNN](#) - Indexed on Nov 9, 2004 Relevance: ★★★★★

LOS ANGELES, California (AP) -- Movies are getting real for the holidays. Along with such fictional folks as Santa, a Christmas grinch, a bottom-dweller named SpongeBob, a womanizer named Alfie and a romantic named Bridget, Hollywood's festive season is packed with fact-based films. Among the real-life figures: are eccentric billionaire Howard Hughes, played by Leonardo DiCaprio in Martin Scorsese's "The Aviator"; sex researcher Alfred Kinsey in "Kinsey," starring Liam Neeson and directed by Bill Condon ("Gods and Monsters"); singer Bobby Darin in "Beyond the Sea," starring Kevin Spacey, who also directed; "Peter Pan" creator J.M.

**Election points to California's winners and losers**Published in [The Press Enterprise](#) - Indexed on Nov 9, 2004 Relevance: ★★★★★

WINNER: Gerrymandering. State Democrats can justifiably crow about holding off the Schwarzenegger juggernaut and hanging onto their majorities in the state Senate and Assembly, as well as all their endangered incumbents. But the state's political map made that outcome nearly inevitable, with districts so sharply drawn to favor one party or another that it became nearly impossible for an opposition candidate to break through. LOSER: Steve Poizner, and other political moderates.

**Guidelive.com**Published in [Travel](#) - Indexed on Nov 9, 2004 Relevance: ★★★★★